

weighed the rival claims of other cities. There was his birthplace, Naissus, in Pannonia, though we cannot suppose that Constantine seriously thought of making this his metropolis. There was Sardica on the Danube, the modern Belgrade and capital of Servia, a city well adapted by its position for playing an important role in history, and conveniently near the most dangerous frontier of the Empire. " My Rome is at Sardica," Constantine was fond of declaring at one period of his career, according to a tradition which was perpetuated by the Byzantine historians. Another possible choice was Nicomedia, which had commended itself to Diocletian, and, finally, there was Salonica, which even now has only to fall into capable hands to become one of the most prosperous cities of eastern Europe.

According to Zosimus, even when Constantine had determined to found his new city at the point where Europe and Asia are divided by the narrow straits, he selected first the Asiatic side. The historian says that he actually began to build and that the foundations of the abandoned city were still to be seen in his day between Troy and Pergamum. But the story is more than doubtful. Legend has naturally been busy with the circumstances attending the Emperor's final choice of Byzantium. Was it inspired, as some say, by the flight of an eagle from Chrysopolis towards Byzantium? Or, while Constantine slept in* Byzantium, did the aged tutelar genius of the place appear to him in a dream and then become transformed into a beautiful maiden, to whom he offered the insignia of royalty ? Inter-